

MODERN CHURCHMAN

A Monthly Magazine to maintain the cause of
TRUTH, FREEDOM, and PROGRESS in the
Church of England.

"By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make
orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance."—*Erasmus*.

"A State without the means of some change is without the
means of its conservation."—*Edmund Burke*.

EDITOR: REV. H. D. A. MAJOR, M.A.

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Printer and Publisher: WILLIAM PARR, Knaresborough.

London Agents:—WILLIAMS & NORGATE, 14, Henrietta Street, W.C.

ELLIOT STOCK, 7, Paternoster Row, E.C.

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- 2.—To uphold the historic comprehensiveness and corporate life of the Church of England, and her Christian spirit of tolerance in all things non-essential.
- 3.—To give all support in their power to those who are honestly and loyally endeavouring to vindicate the truths of Christianity by the light of scholarship and research; and while paying due regard to continuity, to work for such changes in the formularies and practices in the Church of England as from time to time are made necessary by the needs and knowledge of the day.
- 4.—To assert the rights and duties of the laity as constituent members of the Body of Christ.
- 5.—To encourage friendly relations between the Church of England and all other Christian bodies.

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"THE MODERN CHURCHMAN."

The Modern Churchman, the monthly organ of the Churchmen's Union, is sent free to all full members of the Union, and to non-members at a charge of 5/- per annum.

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Business Manager:—Rev. C. MOXON, M.A., Marske Rectory, Richmond, Yorkshire, receives all subscriptions, advts., changes of address, &c., for the *Modern Churchman*.

The Modern Churchman.

No. 11.

FEBRUARY, 1916.

Vol. V.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

The New Spirit at the Front.

A Canadian Chaplain at the Front recently sent to the *Canadian Churchman* a copy of a circular issued jointly by Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic Chaplains to the officers and men of the Second Canadian Division. The following letter sent with the circular to the *Canadian Churchman*, and printed in its issue of Jan. 6th, breathes "the new spirit."

"The enclosed circular letter seems to me of such unique character as to warrant its publication in your paper. It will inform your readers of our efforts out here in the matter of Christian unity. I doubt if you can duplicate this little document at home! Personally, I cannot recall an instance where all communions were represented in a common spiritual enterprise. Romans and Protestants have stood together in moral and social reform on many occasions, but this is quite a different matter. Here you have a distinctly spiritual movement—indeed, it is largely ecclesiastical, for the effort is to increase church membership—and yet there is a very fine spirit of unity manifested! No communion is left out—no one wished to remain outside. It was all very simple, very earnest, without a thought of sectarianism. These pamphlets were distributed to all and sundry—the utmost harmony and goodwill prevailed.

"And the most pleasing thing about it is that it is just in line with all our work at the Front. There is not the least evidence of denominational friction or rivalry. We are a band of brothers endeavouring to speed forward the Kingdom of God. It is a common thing for all communions to meet together at Divine service. All Protestants use the same form of service and the same hymns. Battalions parade as a unit—there is no dividing up of denominations. Even at our communions there is remarkable unity. I have had present at my Eucharists men of every denomination—we gladly welcome everybody. And in return I know that Anglicans have attended the Lord's Supper when administered by Presbyterian Chaplains. Soldiers do not ask what church the Chaplain belongs to as he conducts the service—they gladly receive the ministry of any Chaplain when trouble presses hard upon them. We had an anniversary service on the Sunday after King

Albert's Birthday. It was held in front of the Roman Church, and all Christians were present. The choir of boys sang the Te Deum, the band played the National Anthems of Belgium and the British Empire, and we all joined lustily in the cheers for the heroic King. This war is breaking down many barriers,—social, national, ecclesiastical. We have again and again gloried in the fact that it has manifested in a most remarkable manner the unity of the Empire. May we not also rejoice that it is declaring to the world the need of Christian unity, and hope that the people at home will make ready for the coming opportunity to fully realize our Great High Priest's desire, that 'they all may be one.'"

(Signed) ALLAN P. SHATFORD, Chaplain.

An American Kikuyu.

An interdenominational conference, "along the same general lines as the Edinburgh Conference," is shortly to be held at Panama. The conference is not to be a gathering for legislation on ecclesiastical questions or even on matters of missionary policy.

"All communions or organizations which accept Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour and Lord, and the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Revealed Word of God, and whose purpose is to make the will of Christ prevail in Latin America, are cordially invited to participate in the Panama Conference."

An invitation to the conference was sent to the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. The invitation was accepted, and in consequence a serious controversy has arisen between the "Catholic" and Liberal elements in the Anglican communion in America. So serious does it seem that the Bishop of Minnesota writes that although the American secular press contains articles with such titles as "The split in the Episcopal Church," there is no real danger of a schism, "but there is grave reason to fear that there will be a great deal of bitter feeling stirred up with consequent disadvantage to the unity and efficiency of the work of our Church both at home and abroad unless heated partisans on either side shall be given grace enough to exercise some reasonable control over their tempers, tongues and pens." We shall probably hear more about the matter later. On the one hand, the "Catholic" party feel it to be their duty to oppose to the uttermost any action which

conflicts with Catholic principles as they understand them. The Liberals, on the other hand, who are growing in cohesion, demand that they shall not be fobbed off by the ecclesiastical authorities with phrases and figments from taking action which they regard as demanded by Christian principles and the pressing exigencies of the Christian world.

The feeling of the Liberal in this matter is well expressed by the Rev. H. Symonds, D.D., LL.D., Vicar of Christchurch Cathedral, Montreal, and one of the Vice-Presidents of the Churchmen's Union, in the *Canadian Churchman* of Jan. 13th, in his criticism of Dr. Manning's article on "The Conference on Faith and Order," in the December *Constructive Quarterly*.

Dr. Symonds writes:—

"The fact, however, is that the times call for a thoroughgoing reconsideration of the Anglican position. To me it seems that before we enter into a general Conference on Faith and Order, we need a Conference among ourselves, a Conference in which the very roots from which all our varied schools of thought spring, shall be examined. The mind of Christ, which is the Spirit of the Church, as revealed not in one or two isolated sayings, but in His entire attitude and relation to the system of Judaism, ought to be most carefully and impartially examined. Passing on from this we need an almost equally thorough exposition of the much used and much abused word 'Catholic.' What is the fundamental notion of this word? I have rejoiced to find a thoroughly broad and comprehensive treatment of this topic in Mr. Lacey's book on *Catholicity*, and if we could all agree upon his conclusions, a great step towards our own unity would be achieved.

"Again, on what fundamental principle of Scripture or reason is Baptism administered by a non-episcopally ordained minister valid, and the Holy Communion invalid? Personally, I believe there is no necessary distinction between the two Sacraments. It is a matter of custom and rule, and of custom and rule based upon expediency. Why has an invalidly ordained minister access and, so to speak, control over one channel of grace and not over another? I ask the questions in no carping spirit. They present real difficulties. May not their solution be found in the position that matters of Form and Order, however important they may be, do not, in a spiritual religion, rank as essentials?"

We are sure the bishops would be well advised to call such Conferences for frank and fundamental discussion between representatives of these parties; and we would urge that they be Conferences which do not consist only of moderates on both sides, with all the extremists left out.

Pre-Christian Religion and its Encouragement.

Some words uttered by Dean Inge when preaching recently at the Temple Church, and reported in the *Church Family Newspaper*, throw light upon a subject which often puzzles thoughtful minds. How is it that certain persons highly spiritual and strongly moral are outside our Churches, whereas others whose consciences and sense of duty are less highly developed are to be found inside them?

"Now, it is part of the worldly wisdom of sacerdotalism to realise, what Protestant ministers seldom understand (perhaps it is as well that they do not), that religion, in the sense of cultus, outward observance, rules and ceremonies is not, for the majority of persons, a desperately serious thing. It gives relief to certain vague desires which are really very old racial memories.

"Civilised people spend much of their leisure time in solemnly playing at what for savages are the serious business of life—hunting, fighting, and trying to please, in primitive fashion, dangerous gods or spirits. Our sports, our games, and some of our religious exercises, have no other foundation. Any priest who will fish in the minds of his flock for these unacknowledged and submerged habits of the unconscious mind, which were old before the Christian Church was young, will be sure of his reward, such as it is. But this kind of religion, which is a mere survival from long ages of barbarism, has nothing whatever to do with Christianity. For the Christian religion is a desperately serious thing, and its object is certainly not to make people feel comfortable. Moreover, it looks forward—it strives to bring into being 'a new creature,' as St. Paul says, not to recall into activity half-forgotten instincts which link us with the men of the stone age."

Schoolmasters and Clergymen.

The following paragraph from the Presidential Address delivered by Mr. W. W. Vaughan, Headmaster of Wellington College, at the recent annual meeting of the Incorporated Association of Headmasters, reported in this month's *Journal of Education*, is not without its bearing upon the question of the qualifications of candidates for Holy Orders.

"The one essential quality in a teacher was a living personality, and there was too much trust in machinery. The stress of peaceful days would be much greater than the stress of war. Teachers would be called to build again on the ruins of the past, to restore their shaken, if not shattered ideals; to see to it that the rising generation were better prepared than this for the battle of life—a preparation not only military, but of heart and character, inspired by the perfect devotion to duty that our enemies have shown. The future depended greatly on the men who could be attracted to the work of teachers. A splendid opportunity was offered of revitalizing the profession. There must be less talk of salaries

and more of duty. When, twenty-five years ago, he consulted his old Head Master, Dr. Jex-Blake pointed out to him that from a worldly point of view the position of an assistant master not in Holy Orders offered few attractions, and, though the restriction of head masterships to clerics had since been removed, it was truer than ever now that the Civil Service offered more numerous and more tempting careers. Teaching must still be a vocation, not a business; and as Arnold pointed out in a famous letter, the essential qualification demanded of a teacher is that he should be a Christian and a gentleman."

Is not this the time when a definite effort should be made by our Church authorities to unite more closely the teaching and clerical professions? In how many cases are public school-masters whose gifts and temperament draw them to the ministry prevented from taking Holy Orders by intellectual and dogmatic difficulties? These excellent men number hundreds, yet our authorities deplore and truly, that suitable candidates for Holy Orders are not forthcoming in adequate numbers. A more liberal spirit *openly* avowed by our authorities, and the clear statement that religious, moral, and intellectual qualifications are what our Bishops desire in candidates rather than the ability to accept our formularies literally, might open the way to Holy Orders for many of this excellent and desirable class of men.

A Prophet Indeed.

The *Sussex Daily News* of Feb. 4th, gives a full report of the Brighton celebration of the centenary of F. W. Robertson. At a public meeting presided over by the Mayor of Brighton, the Dean of Durham delivered a biographical address of an instructive and inspiring character.

The following are perhaps some of its most significant passages:—

"In the religious history of England during the 19th century Robertson holds a place apart; standing outside the great organized factions whose internecine conflicts then distracted men's minds and confused their conscience, he was for the most part ignored as well as disliked during his lifetime.

"He started with no special advantage of birth or wealth, gained none of those academic distinctions which sometimes take their place, won the patronage of no great man, and secured the public interest by no great book, received no preferment, formed no party, never preached before the University of Oxford or Cambridge, was never invited to occupy the pulpit at Westminster or St. Paul's, never preached at Court, no

Bishop complimented him with a chaplaincy, and the only honorific position he ever held was that of a High Sheriff's Chaplain. He was the recipient of no honorary degree; and even the innuendos and criticisms which he felt so deeply, and his friends resented so bitterly, did not seem to have attracted much attention outside the little world of Brighton gossip.

"But underneath this apparently complete neglect he was making an impression and establishing an influence different in kind from any that belonged to his contemporaries, and, as the last sixty years had proved, far more profound and lasting. When after six years his ministry was cut short, the public realized with a shock of shame and wonder the magnitude of the loss which his death had inflicted on the nation, and disclosed its own conviction of his value by purchasing edition after edition of his published sermons. By 1865 his place in the front rank of English leaders was firmly established and had never since been challenged.

"The very circumstances which enhanced the greatness of the man increased the difficulties of his biographers. Of all the famous men of the 19th century he had the least interesting career, the bravest in dramatic incident, and the poorest in a public connection. Six years' ministry in the proprietary chapel of a fashionable watering-place was surely the least congruous or probable framework for a spiritual witness of the first quality. Half-a-dozen small volumes of sermons and addresses and a few private letters formed slender foundation for a reputation which was perhaps more secure in England and America than any other to which it is comparable.

"His character was a combination of qualities seldom united. He combined reckless courage and robust commonsense. He was at once an enthusiast and a practical man, a loftily spiritual preacher and a keen sportsman, a fearless advocate for social justice and a relentless critic of popular aspirations, the least insular and the most patriotic of English preachers, the most virile of thinkers and the most sensitive of men. It was the union of so many contradictions in a complex whole that fascinated and alienated, aroused expectations and disappointed them, invited supporters and repelled them. His was indeed an unhappy life and an unhappy ministry, but that was due less to the circumstances of his public work than to the disease which wasted his body, and the fretful ardour which exhausted his mind.

"Robertson, it is of interest to relate, foresaw the approach of a universal war in which the whole character of civilization would be brought into jeopardy, and he perceived the vital importance of the effective unity of the English-speaking communities as a security against so vast a ruin when he wrote, 'how devoutly it is to be hoped that, in the coming conflict of the nations, America and England will stand side by side, instead of opposite; for if not, it will be all over with the cause of liberty, for some centuries at least. The conqueror in the strife will then be a military power, and must perforce crush the peoples under a tyranny.' Robertson, added the Dean, would have made short work of our anaemic pacifists who forget the essential demands of morality in their sentimental horror of bloodshed."

In proposing a vote of thanks to the Dean, the Archdeacon of Hastings said he thought Robertson's world-wide fame was due to Miss Dix, a lady still living in Brighton. When a girl

of sixteen she was in the habit of attending Holy Trinity Church to listen to Robertson's sermons, and although so young, they so deeply impressed her that she learnt shorthand in order to take down verbatim his addresses. If it had not been for that the world would have remained in comparative ignorance of what lay in the heart and the intellect and the soul of that great man. It was through her work that the sermons had been published, and they owed her a great debt of gratitude.

A Pressing Need.

The *Record* of Jan. 20th, published an able article on Prayer Book Revision by a member of the Churchmen's Union, Mr. E. H. Blakeney, Headmaster of the King's School, Ely. All revision seems to be hung up for the present, and Mr. Blakeney frankly recognises the difficulties of the existing situation.

"No 'settlement' is really possible, unless opposing factions stay their hands and curb their tongues. And now the Church of England is divided into two camps, one frankly (or secretly) advocating a return to Roman rite and practice, disguised under that sounding watchword 'Catholic.' Yet, in the hands of these men, 'Catholic' has lost all its real meaning, and has become one of the degraded words of our language; to-day it has almost come to signify the exact opposite of what the word, truly interpreted, really signifies.

"On the other side stand those who will be no party to any attempt to go back to the 'beggarly elements' of pre-Reformation doctrine and practice. They are quite resolved that the Reformation must be the starting-point, not the end of a religious movement. Only half the work of Protestantism was completed when the Marian reaction occurred; we must endeavour to complete, therefore, what was perforce left undone.

"It seems as if we had reached an impasse, for between us and the so-called Catholic party there is a great gulf fixed.

Mr. Blakeney, however, is quite undaunted, and claims that now is the time for action.

"'Wait and see' is a mean and paltry policy that never yet served Church or nation. Our friends the enemy have not been idle meanwhile, and many attempts have been—and more will shortly be—made to familiarise Churchpeople with revision schemes; but all these schemes will be in the nature of a return to pre-Reformation practices. It is therefore, I conceive, a duty on our side to press forward with our own scheme of revision, to act as a necessary counterpoise. That it will be a work requiring the utmost skill, the utmost courage, the utmost tact and faithfulness I do not deny; yet our forefathers found the task not less, but even more, exacting. Did they shrink from it because it seemed an all but impossible task? Not at all. They girded themselves

to the work and they carried it through; shall we prove less energetic, or wise, or resolute than they? Of course we may elect to drift; but assuredly, if we do, we shall have only ourselves to thank if trouble comes upon us in the future."

He concludes his plea with these words:—

"No tinkering with the book is what I ask for—such tinkering as delights the hearts of liturgical experts and Bishops in Convocation—but a free, frank, large-hearted measure of revision whereby we may preserve only what is best in the heritage bequeathed us at the Reformation, omitting the needless or the false, adding what is at once necessary and true; so securing a book which will appeal not only to educated congregations, but to the great heart of the people through the length and breadth of the land."

With many of Mr. Blakeney's proposals all modern-minded Churchmen will find themselves in hearty agreement, but looking at the present situation from a practical point of view, that is the point of view of those who ask: How are we to achieve a really comprehensive and profitable revision within the next few years? we have little hesitation in asserting that to achieve such a revision it is needful to abandon the ideal of liturgical uniformity. The policy of alternative uses—High, Low, Broad, medieval, conservative, progressive—three or four of them of which the present Prayer Book must rank as one, is the only satisfactory and possible solution. We have urged it strongly on several occasions for some years past. It is only Liberal Churchmen who can urge it whole-heartedly. The neglect to adopt it by the Convocations and Prayer Book revisers has helped to produce the present *impasse*. The policy of alternative uses would give to our national—or rather imperial—Church that variety of public worship which the varied type of her membership demands. Instead of giving hardly anyone what they really desire in a matter in which men and women are extremely sensitive—for that would be the effect of a single compromised use strictly enforced—the policy of alternative uses would give the vast majority of Churchmen of all schools what they really desire, and instead of separating them as some fear, it would gradually draw them together by teaching them that unity is not dependent on uniformity, and that you may have discipline and order with variety of usage and sentiment.

THE REVIVAL OF ENGLISH CHRISTIANITY.

The *Challenge* of January 28th, in dealing with an effort—which we have no doubt will prove futile—to unite the Sacramental and Evangelical extremes in the Anglican Communion and drive out the moderates by making the situation intolerable for them, reminds religious revivalists and church reformers of some things which they are apt to forget:—

“The peculiarly intimate connection of Church and nation in our history may have made the Church too little spiritual; but it has also made the people deeply Christian in general temper . . . The Church has always worked in England like leaven within the lump; so it must remain if it is not only to save individual souls, but to influence the nation. It is not the extremist in the end of the day who does most. Neither feverish appeals aiming at conversion, nor rigid systems of discipline, will enable the Church to guide the average Englishman.

“‘I believe the true *spiritual* hold of the Church to reside in her non-discipline,’ wrote Archbishop Temple to Dr. Scott in 1854; and in the Oxford Essays of 1856, contrasting the Church of England with Rome and Puritanism, he wrote:—‘The religious Churchman feels for the Church more what a grown-up son feels for a mother—not submission of judgment, but affection of heart.’”

The writer of this excellent article recognises the bearing of this view upon the revival of the religious life of England, which all earnest Churchmen desire especially to bring about at this time. “This revival,” he writes, “must come through the quickening and deepening of the Christian temper which is already there.” This means, we believe, that the revival will not come about as the result of emotional appeals. The day for that sort of thing is over in this country, as that clear-headed Churchman, Bishop Creighton, perceived many years ago. He wrote to Crutwell in 1876:—

“Missions are a mistake from our point of view. They tend to keep up the popular belief in emotional states of mind being of any serious value. It seems to me that man wants, as the basis of his personal religion, a rational conviction of the need of a spiritual side to his life. Missions obscure this truth; they appeal to men’s terrors or superstitions, and they create something which is evanescent in most cases, and in the few cases in which any permanent results are left, they are *not the highest results of which the man is capable.*” (*Life*, vol. i., p. 178).

If the Church is to succeed in her task she must depend, not on rhetorical and conventional religious appeals, but on the personal ascendancy of her representatives—their spiritual, moral, and intellectual powers. Moreover, these representatives—and they consist of the great body of the clergy—will have to understand something more than they do at present of that most difficult of all things—the psychology of the manhood of England, and strive to work through it.

The *Spectator* of December 18th published a striking article, entitled "The Religion of the Inarticulate," which is calculated to give its readers some insight into that psychology, a psychology, so this writer avers, grievously misunderstood even by some of our excellent chaplains at the front. They do not realize, says he, "the inarticulateness of the working man's religion," and so assume a lack of religion in him. Furthermore, they do not realize that for these men the Christian Religion is a jumble of absurdities and impossibilities, which the Church has never frankly disowned, but which they have very properly discarded, and that the real religion of Christ which these men might gladly accept, they do not in any way connect with the Church or Christianity. As for the educated Englishman, the writer avers that, although he is rather more articulate, he too often finds, with a shock, in the hour of pain and danger, that he has in his past life somehow overlooked the most vital articles in his creed.

The Church, therefore, must first try to understand somewhat better the psychology of the nation, and with this understanding she will abandon many of her present methods. Many methods once effective are so no longer. The recent action of the Chaplain of the Fleet requesting the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge not to send their tracts to men-of-war, as they are not appreciated, is an example of this. Our official defender, the *Guardian*, is somewhat disconcerted by this courageous request, but we may take it that the action of the Chaplain of the Fleet sounds the death knell of the time-honoured tract as an agent

in religious revival, and with the tract a good deal of the other revival paraphernalia will also go.

Another matter which will perhaps help on the hoped for revival is that the clergy should be ready to see it come in unexpected ways, and through agencies and persons, which are novel or even suspect. It may be prophets, not priests, who will accomplish it. Its place of origin may be Nazareth not Bethlehem. It is even conceivable that it may be in our midst now, but our ecclesiastical prejudices may not only be blinding our eyes to it, but even urging us to oppose it. This point is very well brought out by the Rev. Cyril Emmet in an article contributed to the *Guardian* of Jan. 18th. He writes:—

“This, then, is our danger—that the Spirit of Christ may visit us, and that we may strive to quench it because it works in a way we do not expect. We may pray for a revival and actually fail to know when it has come, because it may bring with it the call to cut ourselves free, not merely from our sins—for that we are ready, at least in theory—but from some of those prejudices which we have come to regard as immutable principles. It may bid us cast aside, or at least put in a lower position, some of those things which we sincerely value as part of our religion. The war must bring with it a radical reconstruction of most of our views of life, and we cannot hope that religion will escape the process. Reconstruction has always an unpleasant element even for good people; as Amos warned the Jews of his time, the Day of the Lord may appear to us as darkness, not as light.”

The last point we would urge in this matter of preparation for a revival of the Christian Religion is that the clergy, and indeed all Christian teachers, should once again consider very searchingly what are the essentials of the Christian faith and life. At present it has come about as the deadly result of wrong emphasis and false perspective in our preaching and teaching, combined with the cowardly and callous or ignorant refusal publicly to disown bad methods and false traditions, that to believe in some obscure miracle of the Old or New Testament, or to take part in some ecclesiastical function, is in popular estimation to shew oneself a Christian, whereas to love and serve one's neighbour, to be honest in business, to be fearless and generous in character, is no indication at all of membership in the Church of Christ.

THE OUTFIT OF A MODERN CHURCHMAN.

II.—HIS BIBLE.

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The Bible is part of the outfit of every Churchman. It is the common property of the whole Christian Church, and one of its most treasured possessions. It occupies an unique place, and it has exercised and still exercises an influence which is peculiarly its own. Loyalty to the Bible is a claim that is put forward by every branch of, and by every school of thought in, the Church. They all accept the same Bible. They all acknowledge its unique authority, but it is a matter of simple fact that this authority has been interpreted and explained in different ways. There is, for instance, the theory of verbal inspiration, —not so common now as it once was,—but still exercising an unconscious influence on religious thought. The Bible is represented as infallible down to the most minute detail,—as equally inspired from cover to cover,—as containing a complete and uniform revelation of God without any element of error or imperfection. That view was held almost universally among Churchmen not much more than a generation ago, and it still has its adherents. The Bible becomes the supreme authority over faith and life. There is another view which has been put forward, and may be summed up in the formula, “The Church to teach, the Bible to prove.” It is the Church that is infallible, the authority of the Church that is supreme. The Bible is to support and illustrate what the Church teaches. It still retains its claim, but that claim is, in a sense at least, subordinate to the claim of the Church. It is the function of the Church to interpret the Bible, and it is the Bible as interpreted by the Church which is to be a part of our outfit. I have mentioned those two different views not with the intention of discussing them in detail, but in order to show that while all use the same Bible, the Bible is not the same for all. It is quite legitimate for us to speak of the Bible of the modern

Churchman, just as it was quite legitimate for us to speak of his world. It is the same Bible that the old-fashioned Churchman read and loved, the same Bible which has exercised an unique influence in the past, the same Bible to which all appeal, but the modern Churchman understands it somewhat differently, he looks at it in a new light, he reads it with modern eyes, and he appeals to it in a way of his own. So the question that comes before us to-day is: What place does the Bible take in the religion of a modern Churchman, in what sense is the Bible part of his outfit?

And in the first place the Bible of the modern Churchman is the Bible as it has been interpreted and explained by literary and historical criticism. It is the Bible seen and read in the full light of modern knowledge. The ordinary methods of historical enquiry have been applied to the pages of the Bible. The Bible has been treated by scholars just as all other ancient documents have been treated. The questions of text, of date, of authorship, and of historical value, have to be determined in no other way than they are determined in the case of all ancient literature. To begin with, the modern Churchman accepts that view. He is not afraid of the results of criticism. Rather he believes that it enables him to understand the Bible better, that it will only serve to bring out more clearly its essential value and its spiritual message. But the result of this is to make it quite impossible for the modern Churchman to hold either of the two views that we have already noticed. With regard to the theory of verbal inspiration he will recognise that there is a human element in the Bible. Its various books were written by men, inspired in different measures by the Spirit of God, yet all the time subject to human limitations of knowledge and of outlook. There are varying degrees of inspiration in the Bible,—sometimes this inspiration rises to the very highest level, sometimes it falls far short of it. And the result is that the Bible is not the product of a mere mechanical inspiration so that every part is of the same value, but rather it is the record of a progressive revelation of God to

man, a gradual unfolding of Divine truth in greater and greater fullness as time goes on.

In the same way the modern Churchman cannot without considerable qualification accept the maxim, "The Church to teach, the Bible to prove," if that means that the final interpretation of the Bible rests with ecclesiastical authority. Ecclesiastical authority does not always prove a safe guide. It is apt to stray beyond its legitimate province. It cannot guarantee the accuracy of historical statements. It cannot determine, once for all, the meaning of particular passages. It cannot foreclose enquiry. The Church has often enough been mistaken in its interpretation of the Bible. It has given the sanction of its approval to views which afterwards it has almost entirely abandoned. There can be no security that the Church, acting by itself, may not be mistaken again. The Bible must in the last resort be interpreted by the best knowledge that we can get about it. That does not mean that we can claim finality for these methods at any particular point, but it does mean that ecclesiastical authority must stand aside and must not limit the range of enquiry.

Secondly, the modern Churchman is beginning to learn that the Bible cannot be fully understood if it is read by itself. We have to go outside the pages of the Bible altogether if we are to get the explanation of much that the Bible contains. The Bible is the record of one great religious development—the spiritual experience of an uniquely gifted people, culminating in Christianity. But this development was touched by many external influences. The religious beliefs and practices of other nations with which Israel came into contact from time to time, have left their marks both upon the Old Testament and the New. Babylon, Egypt, Persia, Greece, have each in turn contributed something, and a study of their religions throw light upon many dark pages of the Bible. This is a field which at the present moment is only being gradually opened up; much work remains to be done, and it must be done by the expert, but the results already reached

promise much fuller achievement. The study of Comparative Religion lies outside the sphere of the ordinary Churchman, but we should be prepared to admit that it is necessary for the true understanding of our own Bible. And it has a practical bearing as well. For when we see what other religions have contributed, how many streams of religious development have flowed together into our Bible, then we begin to feel that there is a kind of unity underlying all man's spiritual life, all his search for God, all his strivings after the Infinite, and that one day all that is true and good and noble must be drawn together, must form one great harmony of faith and worship.

And lastly, we should hardly be going too far if we were to say that the Bible of the modern Churchman is not only different in the ways we have tried to indicate, but is in a sense larger than the Bible as we have known and received it. The view that he takes of inspiration make it quite impossible for him to draw a hard and fast line between the Bible and all other sacred writings. He will recognise the work of the spirit of truth outside the pages of the Bible. All the greatest religious literature of the world has had its measure of inspiration. In many lands holy men of old have written as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. All earnest search for truth brings us into touch with the Divine. God has spoken "by divers portions and in divers manners." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." Can we not give a fuller meaning to that aspect of truth? May we not say that in its broadest sense the Bible of the modern Churchman contains all the great utterances of human faith, all the communing of man with His Maker, all the gropings of the human spirit towards the light? We need not love our Bible less, if we admit it is but part of a larger Bible, the records of all God's dealings with His children, a Bible that is written in many tongues and in every age of human history, containing on every page some fragment of precious truth, some token of a Father's love, some glimmer, however faint, of that Light, "that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

GILBERT BURNET.

By the Rev. GAMALIEL MILNER, M.A., Vicar of Roecliffe.

There are perhaps few characters more exposed to ridicule and obloquy than the political parson. He suffers alike from the disapproval of his clerical brethren and from the harsh judgment of the laity, who are inclined to regard him as a meddlesome busybody. Yet if clerical politicians have sometimes secularised the Church, they have also done something to bring the world into contact with Christian ideals. There is a danger in the clergy becoming too much of an exclusive caste. Religion, if it is to be really vital, must touch life at every point. Neither the Priests or Prophets of ancient Israel shewed any marked reluctance to meddle in politics.

Burnet, however, was not only a politician, he had the misfortune to be on what the majority of his brethren considered the wrong side in politics. A Whig and a Latitudinarian on the Episcopal Bench was an object of horror to Tories and High Churchmen. Nor did the chorus of condemnation die away with the generation to which he belonged; his *History of my own Times* being one of the principal authorities for the period of the Revolution, a powerful party had strong motives for wishing to destroy his reputation for veracity and good faith. Yet when criticism has done its worst Burnet remains a good example of a type which has done much to keep the English Church in sympathy with the English Nation, a type represented in the nineteenth century by such men as Dr. Arnold and Dean Stanley, the typical Broad Churchmen.

Gilbert Burnet, though he passed most of his life in England, was a Scotchman, having like many of his fellow countrymen found the road that leads to England "the noblest prospect" in his native land. Born in 1643, his father a Scotch judge and an Episcopalian, had gone into exile rather than take the Covenant; his mother and her family were of the strictest sect of the

Presbyterians. After the Restoration his maternal uncle was hanged as a traitor, a fact of which in after times his political opponents did not fail to remind the future bishop. Possibly the circumstances of his childhood, and the divided allegiance of his parents helped to predispose him in favour of religious toleration. He was a precocious boy—a graduate of Aberdeen University at fourteen. When the King was restored his father found himself on the winning side, and had little difficulty in procuring for his son the offer of a benefice. Providentially, as he afterwards felt, Burnet refused it; instead of being ordained he set out for a ramble through England, Holland, and France. In England he made the acquaintance of many leading men in London and at the Universities. In Holland he mixed freely with men of all sects and parties, and was thereby confirmed in the principle of universal charity, and dislike of bigotry. He says:—

“I made ever this observation, that moderate men have larger and nobler thoughts of God than the zealots.”*

On his return to Scotland he was ordained and presented to the living of Saltoun. He seems to have been a most energetic and devoted parish priest; he tells us in his amusing autobiography that he knew every person in his parish and all their concerns. Throughout life he was an exceedingly hard worker—rising every morning at 4 o'clock, and studying for six hours before he began the duties of the day. In 1669 he resigned his benefice, and became Divinity Professor at Glasgow University. But however he might immerse himself in his parochial or academic duties, he could not for long keep clear of politics. Throughout his career he was continually making up his mind to retire wholly into private life, and ever and anon, from no fault of his own, as he would have us believe, he was again entangled in the affairs of this world.

The state of things in Scotland was such as to provoke interference from a more phlegmatic individual than Burnet. At the Restoration, in opposition to the wishes of the majority of

* Autobiography.

the Scottish people, Episcopacy had been re-established. Charles II. disliked the Kirk; the remembrance of the slights and humiliations which he had undergone during his brief sojourn in the North had produced in the mind of the Merry Monarch a decided impression that Presbyterianism was no religion for a gentleman. Charles, indeed, had no settled convictions, and he hated trouble; but the Anglican Hierarchy had made up their minds that the Church of England could never be safe while Presbytery flourished beyond the Tweed; it was in the North that the storm had gathered which had overthrown their Order in England; now it was their turn, and they were determined to shew as little mercy as they had received. Scientific historians are in the habit of proving, after the event, that whatever has happened was inevitable, but it is hard to believe that the schism which has divided the Church of England from that of Scotland was really unavoidable. There was at the beginning of the reign of Charles a distinct chance of a reconciliation. The stern discipline of the Kirk, the narrow and gloomy conception of life which it enforced had produced, especially among the educated classes, a strong reaction. It would not have been impossible to have attracted to the Episcopal side the more liberal and enlightened elements in the Scottish Nation. As we all know, the opportunity was vilely cast away; the story need not be repeated here, how, between impracticable fanaticism on the one hand, and savage repression on the other, things drifted on to the catastrophe of 1689, to the "rabbling" of the clergy, and the final downfall of Episcopacy.

Burnet took the highly characteristic step of sending a memorial to all the bishops of his acquaintance in which he blamed them for neglecting their dioceses, raising their own families, and persecuting those who differed from them, and reminded them of the example of the bishops of the primitive church. Doubtless the substance of this *Advice to Bishops* was unexceptionable, and the intentions of its author excellent, but it was somewhat tactless in a youth who had barely attained his

majority to take upon him to admonish his superiors. Yet with all his tactlessness and self conceit he was capable of genuine reverence for goodness in others. The passage in which he speaks of Robert Leighton, "that apostolical man," as he calls him, the good genius of the Church of Scotland, as Sharpe was its evil genius, is one of the most striking in his History. He says:—

"I bear the greatest veneration to the memory of that man that I do to any person, and reckon my early knowledge of him among the greatest blessings of my life, for which I know I must give an account to God in the great day in a most particular manner."*

Leighton, with Burnet's assistance, undertook the thankless task of mediating between the two exasperated parties. The basis of the scheme for an "accommodation," as it was called, was a sort of compromise between the Episcopal and Presbyterian forms of Government. It proposed that the Church should be ruled by a synod, in which representatives of the Presbyters should sit side by side with the bishops. This was something like the modified episcopacy suggested by Ussher and other moderate Churchmen at the time of the Civil War. The proposal was in itself reasonable enough; there can be no doubt that the Church of England has exaggerated the monarchical element in the Episcopate.

But it is the nature of religious dissensions to make men love the vices as well as the virtues of the system which they espouse. Regarded by his brethren as the betrayer of the privileges of their Order, Leighton yet failed to conciliate those who believed the Scottish Nation indissolubly bound by the Solemn League and Covenant to extirpate Prelacy.

In 1672, after the publication of his *Vindication of the Authority, Constitution, and Laws of the Church and State of Scotland*, Burnet was offered a bishopric, but declined it. Dissatisfied with the state of things in his native country he removed to London, becoming chaplain at the Rolls Chapel and lecturer at St. Clement's. He now began to figure at

Court, and was admitted into confidential intercourse with the king and his brother, the future James II. He might have seemed disqualified alike by his virtues and by his failings for the life of a courtier. Garrulous and indiscreet, constitutionally unable to keep a secret, wanting in tact and delicacy of feeling, he was perpetually falling into indiscretions, and incurring rebukes which would have cut to the heart a more thin-skinned person. He was always giving unsought advice, silence was almost a physical impossibility to him. Charles II. once said to him in jest :—

“I believe, Doctor, you would be content to be hanged to have the pleasure to make a speech on the scaffold, but I will order drums so that you shall not be heard.”

To which Burnet answered :—

“When it comes to that I shall put my speech into such hands that the world shall see it if they cannot hear it.”

He could be outspoken too in denunciation of vice in high places. There is extant a letter from Burnet to Charles II. remonstrating against the immorality of his private life, which certainly deserves to be ranked among the frankest of epistles ever written by a subject to his sovereign. He says :—

“There is one thing only which can extricate you out of all your troubles ; it is not the change of a minister or a session of Parliament, but a change in your own heart, and in your course of life. . . . You have not feared or served God, but have given yourself up to sinful pleasure. Your majesty may perhaps justly think that many of those who oppose you have no regard for religion, but the body of your people consider it more than you can imagine. . . . What if you should die in the midst of all your sins. I hope you believe there is a God, and a life to come, and that sin shall not pass unpunished. . . . No person alive knows that I have written to you to this purpose. I am sure I can have no other design in it than your good ; for I know very well this is not the method to serve any ends of my own.”

Yet a man who won and retained the esteem of so many of his distinguished contemporaries must have possessed a natural genius for friendship. Beneath his flow of high spirits and somewhat boisterous good humour there were solid qualities ; his judgment when not warped by passion was good ; to a vast knowledge both of men and books he united unremitting industry, real kindness of heart and honesty of purpose.

In 1679 and 1681 he published the two volumes of his *History of the Reformation*, a work of great research, which has served as a quarry for many subsequent writers. The book established his fame, and he was honoured with a complimentary vote by the zealously Protestant House of Commons which sat at the time of the Exclusion Bill.

Upon the accession of James II., he left England and travelled on the Continent, visiting France, Switzerland, and Italy. However vehement in his opposition to Popery as a system, he was quite ready to enter into friendly and courteous relations with individual Roman Catholics. He had never believed the atrocious fictions of Oates, and Lord Stafford, the most illustrious of the sufferers for the pretended plot, had sent for him shortly before his execution. At Rome he made the acquaintance of Cardinal Howard, a kindly and tolerant man, who had little sympathy with the schemes of the Jesuit cabal in England. The Cardinal once asked him about Anglican Orders. Burnet says:—

“He talked much with me concerning the Orders in our Church, to know whether they had been brought down to us by men truly ordained or not; for, he said, they apprehended things would be much more easily brought about, if our Orders could be esteemed valid though given in heresy and schism. I told him I was glad they were possessed with any opinion that made the reconciliation more difficult. But, as for the matter of fact, nothing was more certain than that the ordinations in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign were canonical and regular. He seemed to be persuaded of the truth of this, but lamented it was impossible to bring the Romans to think so.”

On his return from Italy he proceeded to the Hague, where he was well received by William and Mary. The Prince of Orange gave him his confidence, asked his advice in all matters relating to England, and even admitted him into a certain degree of personal friendship. People are sometimes attracted by their opposites, and certainly a more complete contrast could hardly be imagined than that between the cold, reserved Prince and the eager, talkative divine. James II., who suspected Burnet of being in communication with the discontented party in England, wrote letters to the Prince and Princess demanding his surrender, and when it was refused hired assassins to

murder him. Burnet, who had just married a wealthy lady of Scottish extraction, whose family had long resided in Holland, naturalized himself as a citizen of that country, and appealed to the protection of the States.

In the "Glorious Revolution" the Doctor made no inconsiderable figure; he was admitted to all the counsels of his master, and in his memorable expedition to England accompanied him as his chaplain. The fleet set sail from Helvoetsluys, but was forced to put back by a violent gale. To lull James to sleep the Dutch newspapers were ordered to exaggerate the loss which it had sustained. The *Amsterdam Gazette* announced that :—

"In this lamentable disaster there perished nine men-of-war, a thousand horses, and Dr. Burnet."

Burnet however was destined neither to be drowned nor hanged, the "Protestant wind" wafted the fleet down the channel, and brought it safely into Tor Bay on the 5th of November, a day now doubly famous. When the army had landed, Burnet, meeting William, warmly congratulated him on his success, and asked to know his plans for the campaign. The Prince replied :—

"Tell me, Doctor, what do you think of predestination?"

At Exeter he drew up the declaration in which the Englishmen who had repaired to the Prince's standard pledged themselves to live and die with him.

William and Mary being happily established on the throne, Burnet was appointed to the vacant See of Salisbury. It would perhaps have been wiser to have delayed his promotion a few years, for the part which he had played in the Revolution, and his political and theological opinions, had made him obnoxious to a large body of the clergy. The session in which he took his seat in the House of Lords witnessed the introduction of three important measures. The first imposed the Oath of Allegiance on the clergy, and thus gave rise to the schism of the Non-jurors. The second was the famous Toleration Act, which gave liberty of worship to the Protestant Dissenters. Burnet gained some favour with his clerical brethren by

opposing the first of these enactments, but soon lost it by warmly supporting the second. The third measure introduced during the session was the so-called Comprehension Bill, designed to reconcile to the Church the more moderate Nonconformists. It was supported by Nottingham, a strong Tory and High Churchman, and found favour with some who disliked the idea of toleration, and hoped to strengthen the Church by a union with the Presbyterians. It provided for a revision of the Liturgy, and proposed to render optional those usages to which the Puritans objected, the kneeling posture in the reception of the Eucharist, the use of the Cross in Baptism, and the wearing of the surplice. The Bill failed to pass, and the question was referred to Convocation. The King appointed a commission of ten bishops and twenty divines to draw up a revised Liturgy. Among the members of the commission were Tillotson, Beveridge, Tenison, and Burnet himself. Though this attempted revision of the Prayer Book proved abortive, the proposals made by the commission are not without interest at the present time, when Convocation, in its usual leisurely fashion, is engaged in the same task. A full account of the suggested alterations may be found in Procter and Frere's *History of the Book of Common Prayer*.*

In the Convocation to which the revised Liturgy was submitted, the High Church party had a large majority. Irritated by the imposition of the Oath of Allegiance on the clergy, and suspicious of what they regarded as the latitudinarian spirit among the new bishops, they were in no mood for concessions. The proposals were not formally rejected, but the opposition put off their consideration by dilatory motions, and raising points of order.

The remainder of Burnet's public life cannot be detailed here. He continued to give a steady though independent support to the Whig party. During the Tory re-action of the reign of Queen Anne he took a leading part in opposition to the Occasional Conformity Bill.

As a last instance of Burnet's political activity, we may mention his efforts towards procuring for the Church the restoration of the tithes and first fruits seized at the Reformation, from which was formed the fund known as Queen Anne's Bounty.

In his diocese he shewed himself a zealous and indefatigable bishop. He used to stay in a place for a week, preach and confirm every day in some church within six or seven miles, and after Evening Prayer catechise the children. On the Sunday he used to have all the children who had been confirmed to dine with him. He established a college at Salisbury for the training of candidates for Holy Orders, the first example of a theological college in the English Church. Both by precept and example he endeavoured to promote Church Reform. He set his face against the abuses of pluralities and non-residence, and the practice of selling advowsons, "that filthy merchandise of the souls of men," as he called it.

It is worthy of remark that he had himself set an example of adherence to principle in this matter, during his residence in London, when his circumstances were by no means opulent, he refused to accept a country living upon which he was not expected to reside. As bishop he made it a rule to bestow the Prebends in his gift on the clergy of the market towns.

Three of Burnet's works belong to the latter part of his life: his *Pastoral Care*, his book on the XXXIX. Articles, and his *History of my own Times*. The first sets before the clergy a worthy ideal at which to aim. Thomas Scott, the commentator, tells us in his *Force of Truth*, that it was the reading of this book which first awakened him from a life of carelessness and self-indulgence to a sense of the duties of his vocation. The *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles* is the work of a moderate Churchman, equally removed from Rome and Geneva. It was censured by the Lower House of Convocation, chiefly, it would appear, because the author asserts, what is surely undeniable, that certain of the Articles are patient of a Calvinistic interpretation. Burnet himself was far from being a Calvinist, and said that he

heartily wished that some expressions in the Articles on Original Sin and Predestination had been modified. His *History of my own Times* is the book by which he is best known to the modern reader. It lacks the lofty style and the profound insight of Clarendon; it is not always accurate, and is at times disfigured by party spirit and an excessive love of gossip; but it presents a lively picture of men and things during the author's life, and is the principal basis of Macaulay's brilliant though one-sided narrative.

If the character of Burnet is wanting in the saintly grace which charms us in his contemporaries, Ken and Wilson, yet there is this to his credit, that whatever his faults and shortcomings, he honestly and courageously loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and strove earnestly for what seemed to him the highest good of his Church and Nation.

THE INCARNATION AND THE VIRGIN BIRTH.

By the Rev. H. C. TOWNSEND, B.D., Vicar of All Saints,
Wolverhampton.

"What if it be the mission of the age to shake
The torpor of assurance from our creed?"

Browning, *The Ring and the Book*.

The Incarnation is the fundamental fact of Christianity. None of the other facts—even the Resurrection—could have the significance which they possess for us unless Jesus was the Son of God. The Resurrection seems to have been regarded from the very beginning as the proof of this fact. So the apostles Peter and Paul believed and taught. But the fact itself is more important than its proof. No doubt St. Paul's statement that, "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain," is perfectly true, but the point is that it was the Son of God Who was raised and not merely a man, Jesus, the prophet of

Nazareth. This, as I understand it, depends upon the Incarnation. It may be of course, it has been argued, that it was at the Baptism that the man Jesus became Divine.¹ I do not propose to discuss this view now. It was certainly not the view taken by the writers of the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke and of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

The Catholic Church understands by "the Incarnation" that

"Act of condescension whereby the Son of God, Himself very God and of one substance with the Father, took to Himself human nature in order to accomplish its redemption and restoration."²

The best statement of this fundamental fact in the New Testament is to be found in St. John iii. 16:—

"God so loved the world, that *He gave* His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And in I. John iv. 9, 10:—

"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that *God sent* His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, *and sent* His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Here then we have what I will call the bare fact—the fundamental, primary, essential fact of Christianity, stated in the New Testament in the words just quoted, and proved, at any rate I think we may say, to the satisfaction of the primitive Church, by the Resurrection. It is when we come to consider the methods or manner of the Incarnation that difficulties occur. It is important to notice that in the two passages quoted above nothing whatever is said on this point. There is no kind of detail—just the statement of fact. The Gospel tells us that *God gave*, the Epistle, that *God sent* His only begotten Son. In both places the reason for the sending is given, but as to how it was accomplished both are silent.⁸

¹ Kirsopp Lake, *The Stewardship of Faith*, 1915. "In some varieties of thought the baptism took the place of the birth, and indeed there was for several centuries a confusion of thought on the point, which is reflected in the history of Christmas and Epiphany, as Usener has shown. Cf. Hastings *Dic. Rel. and Ethics*."

² Hast. *B.D.* Article *Incarnation*, by Otterley.

³ Cf. Roms. viii., 3. "... God *sending* His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. . . ." Gal. iv., 4. "God *sent forth* His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. . . ." This last passage does refer to "method," and seems to suggest the ordinary manner of birth.

It will probably be allowed by all who believe in a personal God, that He could have accomplished this "sending" in more than any one particular way—in any way—that He pleased.¹

Our reverence for tradition, our loyalty to the *ipsissima verba* of summaries of faith drawn up centuries ago, has not yet actually reached the stage of circumscribing and limiting the power of the Almighty, though it sometimes brings us perilously near "a laying aside the commandment of God in favour of the traditions of men." But, although we may still, in theory, be willing to allow that God could have chosen any conceivable method, or, indeed, any method inconceivable to us, yet, in fact, the vast majority of Christians are not willing—are absolutely antagonistic—to the consideration of any other method than that which is known to us as the Virgin birth.

This is only one of the two methods suggested in the New Testament itself.² For the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, making all the allowance sometimes over-generously claimed, for the weakness of an argument from silence, cannot be said to postulate a Virgin birth.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us would never suggest to the mind not otherwise acquainted with it, we might even say, already predisposed in its favour, such an idea. It is possible to go even further than this, and to argue that it rather suggests the adoption by the Word of the normal method of coming into the world.

Plummer, on St. Matt., referring to the Virgin birth, says:—

"And elsewhere in the New Testament the Incarnation is indicated in a totally different way."—John i. 14.³

¹ Cf. Hast. *Dict. Christ and Gospels*, Article *Incarnation*, by Kilpatrick. "... it ought to be freely admitted that the Incarnation *might* have taken place under normal human conditions. We are not in a position to determine *a priori* what course Infinite Power and Love shall take. It is impossible, therefore, to place the *mode* of the Incarnation, through a virgin-birth, on the same footing of religious or theological importance as the *great fact* of the Incarnation itself."

² Excluding the theory referred to above, for which Mark is regarded as the chief authority, that Jesus became Divine at His baptism, which offers a third method, though it has nothing to do with Incarnation strictly so called.

³ Cf. also Hebrews ii., 9, "We saw Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels." ii., 14, "... as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same." x., 5, "... a body hast Thou prepared me." Cf. also St. Paul in Gal. iv. 4, footnote above.

It does seem then that it *was* possible for those who accepted the Incarnation to differ in their notions of its method. It is certainly possible to-day. The object of this paper, so far from denying the Virgin birth, is to urge that, while it may have been the method adopted by Him to Whom all methods were open, yet, so long as the fundamental vital fact of the Incarnation is held, it does not really matter very much to us in what manner it came about. *Relatively*, it is unimportant.¹

Consideration of the manner in which, apparently, God chooses to accomplish His purposes in the world, teaches us that He does so along what we may call *normal* rather than abnormal lines. We have at least advanced beyond the utterly crude conception that God only works by "miracle," *i.e.*, by spasmodic and catastrophic action. For example, it is surely impossible for us to conceive of God as saying, "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. Gen. xi. 7.

Indeed a careful study of the miracles of the New Testament seems to reveal a preference for the use of normal means even to attain what we should call an abnormal result. In the Feeding of the Multitude it is the loaves which are already there that are taken and used—there is no miraculous creation of hundreds of fresh ones out of nothing,—though we are told that 200 pennyworth would not have been sufficient.

In the Miracle at Cana, it is the water which is already there, that is taken and used, though it is not water at all which is needed. There is no miraculous creation of wine in the empty pots, which is, perhaps, what we should have expected. Why fill the pots with what is not required, when they are already ready for what is required? These things are surely not without significance.

¹ Kilpatrick. "The supernatural birth of Jesus is not our warrant for belief in His Divinity and His Sinlessness." Dr. Armitage Robinson, in an open Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote as follows:—"The Incarnation is a cardinal doctrine of the faith . . . But to say that the historical fact of the Virgin birth is a cardinal doctrine of the faith is to use language which no Synod of Bishops, so far as I am aware, has ever ventured to use. It is to confuse the Incarnation with the special mode of the Incarnation in a way for which Christian theology offers no precedent."

"God *sent* His only Begotten Son into the world."

All experience of past history, all the progressive development of the understanding of the working of Providence in nature, seems to postulate an ordinary birth in a perfectly normal manner. Always provided, of course, that the end can be attained in such a way. But we have already refused to deny that with God all things are possible.

It is sometimes argued that if the Resurrection was "unique," therefore the Birth must be so.

But here there is surely no sound analogy.

There existed no normal method of raising a person from the dead. It may be an entirely abnormal experience and the manner of it *may be*, after all, quite normal. For birth into the world, there did exist a regular and normal method, never departed from, and capable, on our premises of the power of God, of attaining the desired end. Why then, should it be departed from and a new creation take place?

To a certain extent, at any rate, the dogma of the Virgin birth, insulates Jesus from direct touch with sinful humanity. It sets out to safeguard the Divinity. But it does so at the expense of the humanity.¹ That is too high a price for us to pay. In the Incarnation God *became man*. *Sent* by the Father. For us men, and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and was Incarnate.

On the other hand, acceptance of an ordinary birth should exercise considerable influence in raising and purifying the somewhat degraded view held by many, of the act of generation.²

It would seem then that the only objection, which can really be taken by any reasonable person, to allowing liberty of judgment in this matter, is the account given in the first two chapters of Matt. and Luke.

The answers that can be given to this objection ought to be fairly considered. (I may say, that I believe these chapters to be a part of the original Gospel, as we have it, in each case).

¹ One of its direct results is the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

² It is worth remembering that many Jewish women cherished the hope of becoming the mother of the Messiah, and that in the normal manner.

First, it should be recognised that we do not now feel obliged to regard the Bible as infallible.

Belief in the literal inspiration of Old or New Testament has, whether we approve or not, gone, and gone for good. It cannot, therefore, be said, that the accounts in Matt. and Luke *must* be accepted, simply for the reason that they are where they are. It can be said that they show us that this was one of the ways in which, at that time, the Incarnation was thought to have taken place.

Secondly, it is necessary that the date of the documents should be considered. They are both later than Mark and the Pauline Epistles. In these earlier writings there is no reference to a Virgin birth, though the Incarnation is definitely stated and accepted. Further, it is at least open to argument whether a normal birth is not recognised.¹

Thirdly, the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, which is later than Matt. and Luke, does not seem to suggest a Virgin birth, but, as I have said, rather the contrary, though the Pre-existence and Incarnation are most prominent. This would indicate that even after Matt. and Luke were written, the manner of the Incarnation was still an open question.²

In conclusion, therefore, I repeat my plea for toleration and an open mind with regard to this dogma.

Acceptance of the fundamental vital fact stated by St. Paul and St. John that God *sent* His Son into the world ought surely to be sufficient for all of us.

The Virgin birth, *may be*, a human explanation of the manner in which this stupendous fact (far more stupendous than any possible explanation of it) came about. It *may be*, I do not say it is, Interpretation rather than Fact. Let us not condemn, or exclude from our fellowship in Christ,

¹ Yet there is an identical impression conveyed as to the Personality of Jesus. Cf. Gore, *Bampton Lectures on the Incarnation*, pp. 65-66.

² "St. John does not describe the human Birth of Christ, because the fact of the Incarnation outweighed with him the actual process."—H. A. Watson, *Hulsean Lectures*, 1916. The Church has most wisely selected as the Gospel for Christmas the statement of the Incarnation, not that of the Virgin Birth.

those, who in feeling after Truth, honestly and sincerely take this view.¹

For after all (to quote from Rev. F. L. Boyd, *Facing Kikuyu* :—

“The peculiar mission of the Church is to carry forward into the new age the structural life and thought consolidated in the past, and *to adjust it to the progressive purpose of God*. We therefore define the mission of this part of the Church to be the presentation to the world of Catholic Faith and practice *in a form in which it can be intellectually received and used*.”²

And beside these words we may set some others not less significant by the Rev. A. E. J. Rawlinson in his recent book, *Dogma, Fact, and Experience*.

“It has been the business of the theologian, all through the Church’s history, to study, to investigate, to interpret, and to express in new ways the truths which lie at the basis of Christianity; it has been his business, in a word, to *translate* Christianity, upon its intellectual side, into such terms as shall be intelligible to his contemporaries. Just as students of history know well enough that all periods are transitional, and all times are in greater or less degree times of crisis, so students of historical theology know that all periods have been periods of doctrinal re-statement and re-interpretation. Theology, wherever it has been a living discipline, and not merely an unthinking tradition, has claimed emancipation from the dead hand of the past; theologians have thought things out afresh, and have aimed at expressing in their own terms, and in their own way, the permanent content of the Christian revelation. Each succeeding generation has consequently its own problem of modernism to face, and in each succeeding generation there is apt to be a certain amount of tension between the rival claims of authority and of intellectual freedom. Properly regarded, each is essential to the other; authority has no value except as the free consensus of independent minds; freedom of thought and enquiry, interpreted as a mere licence of emancipation from the past, and pursued without reference to the witness of tradition, is liable to issue in conclusions more negative than true.”

¹ The writer was asked if he would baptise a man who was unable to express belief in the Virgin birth. Here is the practical issue! It should be impossible to refuse formal admission to the Christian Church to anyone who accepts the Incarnation and the Resurrection as *facts*.—H.C.T.

[Quite as serious a question is whether our Bishops would ordain a man who said he was unable to believe in the Virgin birth.—ED. M.C.]

² Italics are mine.

EASTERN AND WESTERN CHRISTIANITY.

A Sermon preached in Durham Cathedral, December 19th, 1915,
by Rev. ALFRED FAWKES, M.A., Vicar of Ashby St. Ledgers.

"As far as the East is from the West."—*Psalm ciii. 12.*

The entrance of Russia into the alliance of the Western Powers, the great services which she has rendered to the common cause, and the influential voice which she will necessarily have in the settlement of Europe which will follow the present war, call attention, as to the Russian people, so in particular to their religion. This is a vital factor in their lives; and may well, as Russia and England come into closer contact, affect our English Churches, and influence the development of Christianity in the West. There are enthusiasts who see in the Eastern Churches of to-day the ideal—I had almost said the Utopian—Church of the Fathers. There are others, perhaps equally enthusiasts, who see in them no more than a dead ritual—a mummy, swathed and bandaged, from which the breath of life has gone. Both are wrong. An ideal is, as such, removed from actual life. All Churches, because they are composed of men, have their shortcomings; and neither the Church of the Fathers, nor that of the grandfathers, was an exception; "the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch," our article reminds us, as well as the Church of Rome, "have erred." On the other hand the Eastern Churches have one distinctive note—that of martyrdom. And God, who is just, will not fail the children of the martyrs; "dear shall their blood be in His sight."

"Look, how far the East is from the West." There is a gulf temperamentally as well as geographically between them;

and this, more than any technicality of theology, brought about the original separation between the two. The temper of the West was authoritative and its methods were legal. It took its stand on what in an uncritical age was believed to be "apostolical" tradition—*i.e.*, the tradition of the second century—the hierarchy, the episcopate, and the formal completion of both in the Papacy; it regarded dogma as matter of positive enactment, imposed by regulation, and from without. While the East was speculative; it valued ideas for their own sake, which the West does not, and never did. Its speculation degenerated often enough into hair-splitting; but truth, the Achilles' heel of Western theologians, was kept in view. While the point of departure was not the so-called Apostolical, but the primitive. Hence less insistence on uniformity; a freer and a more spontaneous life. The Gospel within the Gospel was not lost sight of; the principle of recovery was there.

To the average Englishman, with his curious provincialism of training and outlook, foreign religion is a problem. His travels take him to France, because it is near, or to Italy, because of its classical traditions; and in each country he finds an historical Church outwardly more imposing and more picturesque than his own. He may not, he probably does not, understand this Church—ideas are not his strong point; but there are larger horizons, he sees, than those of Oxford or Lambeth; Rome is a force even in the world of to-day. But the Latin, or Roman, Church, venerable and widespread as it is, is not Christendom. Had he gone North or East—to Holland, or Denmark, or Germany, or Scandinavia—he would have come upon the great Churches of the Reformation, Calvinist and Lutheran; while, had he extended his travels to the vast Empire that stretches from the Baltic to the Pacific, and from the Arctic Ocean to the Himalayas, he would have found a Church structurally older than Latin, English, or Lutheran—"the Church of the seventh century turned to stone." It is the worse for wind and weather—how could it not be after thirteen centuries wear? but there has been no new departure, no

development on later lines. Our landmarks do not exist for this ancient Church; the Papacy, the Augustinian theology, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Revolution—she has passed them by. If their obscure rumour reached her, it came as if from another planet—confused, distant, dimly heard.

“The brooding East with awe beheld
Her impious younger world:
The Roman tempest swell'd and swell'd,
And on her head was hurled.

The East bowed low before the blast
In patient, deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.”

There is something great in this attitude of detachment—something that the Western world has never understood, and will never understand. And it is big with consequence. When the sleeper wakes she will be unhampered by alien traditions, and will develop on her own not on our lines. Our antitheses—Church and State, Nature and Grace, Law and Liberty, and the like, are, and will remain, meaningless for her. For Eastern Christianity mirrors the Slav temperament, which is in the highest degree adventurous and idealistic; it is impossible to conceive it fettered by convention, or tradition, or law imposed from without. The Slav will not be deterred by consequences; the social, economic and critical movements of our generation influence him profoundly; the setting of his world will fall, has perhaps already fallen, away. But—and it is here that he is un-Western—he will not let his world go with its setting; he will be kept from that *manque d'humanité* which a great French scholar associates with the scientific temper, which is scientific and nothing more, by his vivid Christ-consciousness, and his mystical insight into the heart of things. He is a child; and frankly not ashamed of being one; his ideal is flesh and blood, the living man. His future must be great. The rate at which the Slav races increase is unique; the territory at their disposal is practically unlimited; their national temper is religious—very much more so than ours.

It is probable that in a few generations the Eastern Churches will outnumber and outweigh the Western. We shall do well to make our account with them; they may be our heirs.

The resemblances between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism are obvious, but superficial; there is an essential difference between the two. To the Eastern, Catholic means Latin, or Roman, Catholic. He calls his own Church not Catholic, but Orthodox; and while Catholicism signifies something external—extension in time and place, or a certain relation to the Papacy. Orthodoxy signifies something internal—right thinking, or belief. The Eastern Churches have, indeed, an elaborate ceremonial; a pronounced, though popular and undefined *cultus* of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints; they hold what we should call a “high” view of the sacraments—though less as a dogma than as a matter of feeling; the appeal being not to formula, but to instinct and the heart. But they are strongly anti-Papal; the antipathy to Latins and Latinism forms part of Slav patriotism, and is profound. The notion of the Church as a *Societas perfecta*, independent of and higher than the State, is foreign to them: they are what Western theologians would describe as Erastian both in theory and in fact. And they have little sacerdotalism in our sense of the word. The old Greek sense of equality was intolerant of superiority; and this sentiment is still strong in Greece and the Balkan countries, while in Russia the civil power is supreme. The priest exercises certain functions—as civil officials do; with their discharge his official character begins and ends. The speculative theology taken over from the later Empire died out with the barbaric invasions; only the shell remains. Dogma has become feeling; the Eucharist is a mystery; Confession not the Latin integral enumeration of sins, but a form, like the General Confession in our own service, into which more or less content can be put according to circumstances; the growth of legend, though exuberant, is floating, and without fixed form.

The Gospels are familiar to all, and their maxims are practised; in spite of much moral laxity the standard of the distinctively Christian virtues—charity, forgiveness, unworldliness, simplicity of heart, is higher than here. No one who has seen the Russian pilgrims in the Holy Land can doubt their piety; nor could Tolstoi have flourished on any but a profoundly Christian soil. The archaic framework which has been retained is framework only, and scarcely claims to be more. But it has served its purpose, preserving through Byzantine decay and the storm of Turkish conquest the pearl of great price intact. And this with the indescribable aroma of antiquity: the majesty of the ages is there.

It may not be wholly fanciful to see in Eastern Christianity the possible reconciliation of religious elements, apparently conflicting, with which our Western Churches can ill dispense. The reaction towards medieval belief and observance which began with the Romantic movement, and under various names is still with us, if mainly political and literary, is in part religious; many persons who are influenced by it, and so—for experience shews that this is a necessary consequence—stand outside the modern mind-movement, do so because they want something which modern religion (they think) cannot give them, and medieval can. On both heads they are mistaken.

What we find in a religious system depends on what we bring to it; it is we ourselves who must "lift up our hearts unto the Lord." And what they are in search of either is not to be found where they seek it; or, if found, is adulterated with elements which make it useless and harmful—magical beliefs, dead formulas, the ambitions of a hierarchy, the stunting and arrest of growth. Yet wonder, awe, mystery, the thrill of spiritual contact, the sense of the Divine—these things have their place in human nature. To some temperaments they mean much and intensely; repress them, and the soul is starved. Alien as they were to his austere creed, the Puritan poet was sensitive to these traditional sanctities: the antique pillars,

the storied windows, the grave and measured ritual, the solemn chant give wings, he knew, to prayer.

“Then let the pealing organ blow
To the full voiced Quire below,
In Service high and Anthem clear,
As may, with sweetness, through mine ear
Dissolve me into extasies
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.”

“Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house,” says the Psalmist. If the mystical and spiritual symbolism which is one of the notes of Eastern Christianity, helps our more material West to retain the treasure of the past without its earthen vessel, the perfume of the ages without their dust and effluvium, it will have deserved well of mankind.

Yet there is more than this. The Slav races, with their sublime recklessness, their soaring idealism, and their intense spirituality—here, it may well be, is the opening upon new horizons, the breath of life at whose touch the dead revive. Children, indeed, these races are—with children’s faults, children’s extravagances, children’s follies. But there are follies wiser than wisdom, and “it is better to be a fool than to be dead.” “Too soon our childhood’s years depart ;

Yet theirs the children’s goal
Who keep through age the childlike heart,
The childlike soul.”

The future is with the young. Was not this in the mind of Christ when He called to Him a little child, and set him in the midst of them and said, “Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven ?”

CHURCHMEN'S UNION NEWS.

Hertfordshire Branch.—A meeting of members of the Churchmen's Union resident in Hertfordshire, was held on Jan. 18th, at Acrise, St. Alban's, by kind invitation of Canon Papillon, to consider the question of the formation of a local branch of the Union.

A proposal, made by the Rev. W. Manning, and seconded by H. E. Walker, Esq., to the effect "that a branch of the Churchmen's Union be established for Hertfordshire," was unanimously adopted; and Canon Papillon kindly consented to act as president for the first year.

It is hoped that the Branch will be powerful in drawing together, and in promoting a feeling of brotherhood among, clergy and laity of Hertfordshire, who are interested in theological and religious progress.

Arrangements are being made for the holding of another meeting shortly.

West London Branch.—This branch held its fifteenth meeting, by the kind invitation of Sir Richard and Lady Stapley, at 33, Bloomsbury Square, on Tuesday, Jan. 18th, at 8 p.m., when 25 members were present.

The Rev. W. A. Cunningham Craig, Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, Holborn Viaduct, read a paper on "The Catholic Modernist and the Liberal Protestant." After paying a tribute to the original Broad Church leaders, the speaker remarked that the Liberal movement in Theology to-day was of a much wider character than that which they initiated. Discussing the trend of that movement within the confines of the Church of England, Mr. Cunningham Craig pointed out two forms in which it was manifested. Roughly speaking the two forms corresponded with the "Catholic" and "Protestant" sections of the Church. While granting that the critical attitude so frankly adopted by many Anglo-Catholics was not necessarily incompatible with the subservience to ecclesiastical tradition which they professed, the speaker evidently thought that the genius of the Liberal movement was much more closely allied to the spirit of Protestantism, which he described in eloquent terms. The bond which united the Catholic Modernist and the Liberal Protestant was mainly an intellectual one, and while the utmost toleration was desirable, no great measure of co-operation appeared at present to be practicable.

In the interesting discussion which followed, further light was thrown upon Catholic Liberalism by one or two sympathetic speakers. Expression was given to the view that there is a great deal of Liberalism among moderate Churchmen who have no special affinities with either the

Evangelical or the Ritualistic parties. It was urged that the bond between Christian worshippers of different types is spiritual rather than intellectual. All, however, agreed in thanking Mr. Cunningham Craig for a most suggestive paper, and a wish was expressed that it might be published.

South Essex Branch.—A meeting of Churchmen's Union members resident in South Essex was held on January 29th, at the Chaplaincy, Hornchurch, by the kind invitation of the Rev. Herbert Dale, who also presided at the meeting.

The Rev. Hubert Handley read a most suggestive and stimulating paper on "The need for modern Churchmen," in which he dealt especially with the ethical, social, and religious impulses which have been quickened by the war, and the part to be played by modern Churchmen in capturing these movements for the Church of the future.

It was resolved unanimously that, subject to the approval of the Council, a local Branch be formed for South Essex, and that meetings be held quarterly at the most convenient centres.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"WHAT AILS THE CHURCH?"

SIR,

To the Editor of THE MODERN CHURCHMAN.

Underneath almost every sentence from cover to cover of the *Modern Churchman* in every issue the thought seems to me to be running that Christianity, as at present represented by its leaders, is off the rails, and that the appallingly crying need is to get it on to them. Many of the people who do not attend places of worship, and are not interested in "Religion" (*sic*) are as good, if not better, than those who do and are. Many of us Army Chaplains are young and alarmingly oblivious of this fact, and as Dean Henson's speech implies, we are being deceived by the increased attendance at Holy Communion and all services at the front. Like ostriches we will not look, or we fail to see the significance that lies in the fact that the vast majority of the laity are ignorant of the whole question at issue.

It has been on my mind to write to you for many months, and mention an incident, which I think of great value, as an illustration of very much of what is the whole problem before the Church and the Churches. In a certain battalion of the old regular army at Ypres were two old soldiers. They were chums of old standing—both of them incorrigible drunkards, even in that horrible salient unable to resist every opportunity to excessive

drinking, when off duty. These two men could be relied upon to carry through all the most hazardous tasks of their company, such as fetching ammunition to the trenches, leading small parties to do risky jobs beyond the fire trenches. A day came when one of them was mortally wounded beyond the fire trench. No one could stop his chum from rushing out to him and giving up his life in the attempt to fetch him back. Thus ended the lives of the two most incorrigible drunkards of that battalion, who had been considered hopeless derelicts for years.

Now that is enough to make a parson think furiously. I brush aside the plea that these men had made such wrecks of their lives as to have become indifferent to what happened to them. I despise and denounce such a plea. It is enough to point out that others, who have made moral havoc of their lives, have not shown such courage, or, if it please you, such recklessness. There is but one kind of heroism, whether shown by the "religious" or "irreligious," "moral" or "immoral."

Some very wonderful sermons of the Rev. J. MacGregor—Presbyterian—deal in a very natural way with Christ's plan and methods of appealing to and dealing with and getting at the good in the ordinary man and woman of His day. We clergy are powerless among such men as those two, and many others who are disaffected towards Christianity as we preach it to them. And as for the services, they are meaningless to them—or almost entirely so,—scarcely a hymn is suitable. The *Venite* in our little active service book contains the four last verses, of which even the Bishop of Oxford disapproves. These verses contradict Mr. Temple's magnificent sermon on the "Astonishment of God," and flatly contradict a chaplain's address to soldiers going to face death, which simply must be, time and time again, people of His pasture, the sheep of His Hand."

Surely this war, and all that it is bringing forth, must, and shall, force us to forsake this attitude of jogging along, content with reform so slow as to be imperceptible, and lead us to revise and remove the more objectionable and obscure, and almost blasphemous things which are said, sung, and read in our services.

C. I. RADFORD, C.F.

31st Dec. 1915.

A PRAYER IN TIME OF WAR.

O MOST MERCIFUL FATHER, Source of all Spiritual Comfort, help us, we beseech Thee, in times of tribulation to stretch forth our hands to Thy Presence with fresh courage and hope. Teach us new lessons of self-control in success, and patience in adversity. Give us human fortitude in the midst of danger, and spiritual strength in the hour of temptation. Help us to comfort those suffering in body and mind. Grant that we may use these Thy gifts in the service of our countrymen and of all who are striving to succour humanity, to the honour of our Master, Thy Son, Jesus Christ.—Amen.